



**September 2012**

**NEWSLETTER FOR THE PAID & VOLUNTEER STAFF OF RAILTOWN 1897 STATE HISTORIC PARK**

**Upcoming Events**

**September 1, 2 & 3**

Labor Day Weekend  
on-board entertainment  
with fiddler Dave

**September 4**

Railtown ladies luncheon  
will be at Lupita's  
Call Marge @ 533-4595

**October 2**

Railtown Ladies Luncheon  
will be at the Hong Kong  
Chinese Restaurant in  
Sonora

**October 4**

Pumpkin gathering,  
at Del Oso Farms in  
Manteca. Volunteers  
needed!

**October 6**

Membership Day!  
Special Twilight Trains  
Entertainment by  
The Black Irish Band  
5-8PM on the platform  
and Keith Keenom on-  
board the trains at 6PM  
and 7PM (\*Note: if the  
trains fill up, a 5PM train  
might be added)

**October Weekends**

Harvest Haunt  
Express trains (\*Note:  
We have a few "Skeleton"  
T-shirts left. If you'd like to  
order one, please call  
the office 984-4408)

**Santa's Starlight  
Express**

Trains will take place on  
Friday and Saturday  
November 23rd & 24th  
First planning meeting  
Thursday September 20th  
@ 1PM In the  
Crew Caboose



**Passenger Service on the Sierra Railway — Dave Connery**

From the day it was chartered, the Sierra Railway leaders knew hauling freight would provide the primary financial support for this railroad. This was true of nearly every other steam railroad (both mainline and short line) throughout North America. But from day one, passenger service was planned and promoted. As a common carrier the Sierra Railway depended on some level of public support and had to provide the general public with value to justify its special treatment under the law. Nearly every early newspaper account of the railroad focused on passenger service because that is what was of key interest and concern to the average citizen. There was a great celebration when the first passenger train arrived first in Jamestown, then Sonora, next Carters (Tuolumne City) and finally Angels Camp. As a part of passenger service, the railroad built the Nevills Hotel in Jamestown and the Turnback Inn in Tuolumne City – two locations with a shortage of good rooms near the railroad facilities (Sonora had good hotels a few blocks from the depot by the time the railroad arrived.) In the first years of operation, company managers were very pleased with the level of passenger traffic on the Sierra.

Timetables were issued on a regular basis constantly refining the departure and arrival times to coordinate with Southern Pacific and Santa Fe passenger trains in Oakdale. In May 1898, the Sierra and Southern Pacific tried joint night trains between Jamestown and San Francisco utilizing SP Pullman cars but ridership was insufficient and this service ended after only six weeks. Beginning in 1899 through passenger cars were operated over the Sierra and the Southern Pacific line between Tuolumne City and Stockton so passengers could ride without changing cars in Oakdale. Regular scheduled passenger service on the Sierra was provided from November, 1897 until August, 1938. In the later years (during the Great Depression) this was a mixed train service, meaning the train included both passenger and freight cars. Throughout most of the years of passenger operation, a train would leave Tuolumne City about 6:30 or 7 AM, pass through Jamestown about 8 AM where passengers from the Angels Branch would join the train and arrive in Oakdale about 9 or 9:30 AM. The afternoon train would depart Oakdale between 1:30 and 2:30 PM, arrive in Jamestown between 3 and 4 PM and end the run in Tuolumne about 4:30 to 5:30 PM. Passengers from Angels would leave there about 6 AM in the morning and return about 5 or 6 PM. The Sierra never had a large stable of passenger equipment and it is quite likely Southern Pacific cars were often used (leased?) to supplement the Sierra fleet. Car #2 (Tuolumne) a smoker and baggage combine and (continued next page)

(continued from page 1) #3 (Stanislaus) a coach were built by Jackson & Sharp in 1897. Coach #3 is preserved at CSRM. Car #4 came with Bullock from the Prescott & Arizona Central and was rebuilt first as a mail-express and later turned into a baggage-express. Car #5 the Angels Branch Combine and #6 the Angels Branch Coach were both built by the Holman Car Co. of San Francisco in 1902 and are in our roundhouse. Car #7 was built in Jamestown as a Combine-Caboose and converted to wreck train service in 1914. Car #8 was built by American Car & Foundry as a Combine. Car #9 was built in Jamestown as a Combine-Caboose and is currently stored in the car shed at Jamestown. In addition to these passenger cars, the Sierra also had four open excursion (picnic) cars built here in 1905 which were used on numerous special events in the early days and were sold to Standard Lumber in 1918. In addition, the Sierra acquired a couple of passenger cars (including our coach #2) for movie work and in the 1970's a number of cars were purchased for excursion service and include the cars we continue to use on our trains today. The first cars were painted a bright yellow but were repainted into "Pullman Brown" beginning in 1900, probably to match the cars of the SP and ATSF.

Passenger receipts quickly grew in the early years to about \$30,000 a year and once the line was completed to Tuolumne City, to the \$70,000 to \$90,000 annual range and then in 1903, after the opening of the Angels Branch, jumped to nearly \$120,000 annually. The receipts stayed in this range until 1916, when they began to fall and fell steadily until 1930, reaching about \$10,000. This decline paralleled the increased use of jitneys and private vehicles over the greatly improved road system. From this point on, passenger receipts were negligible and the Interstate Commerce Commission approved the abandonment of passenger service on the Sierra effective in August 1938. To replace their passenger trains, the Sierra inaugurated a bus service, which was in turn sold to Greyhound and the Sierra was out of regular passenger service. In comparison, freight revenues were nearly always more than double those from the passenger side of the business and in fact freight revenues climbed to their highest levels in the 1920's, during the building of the Hetch-Hetchy, Don Pedro and Melones dams when they topped \$1 Million several years.

While regular passenger service ended in 1938, a new type of passenger service had begun a year earlier in 1937 when the California-Nevada Railroad Historical Society organized a rail fan excursion on the Sierra. Over the next 25 years additional excursions were organized by various groups to take advantage of the "old time railroad experience" offered by the equipment retained for movie work. In 1971 the facilities at Jamestown were turned into Railtown 1897 and in 1982 the property was acquired by the State of California and opened as a State Historic Park. Our weekend trains continue the long tradition of passenger service on the Sierra dating back to the arrival of the first passenger train in Jamestown on November 10, 1897.



(left to right) Walt Pierson demonstrating a ride on our Model T for Delta Pick Mello (CSRMF Membership Director); During the Amgen Bicycle Tour our engine crew poses for a great shot on the No. 3 (from top left clockwise) George Sapp, Stephanie Tadlock, Kevin Zimmerman, Dave Tadlock, David Ethier, Tommy Johnson, Tom Bispo; Jorg Largent mans the switch at Rock Siding while working with the engine crew.





### Volunteers of The Month— Leroy & Wilma Bushart

This month we'd like to recognize longtime volunteers Leroy & Wilma Bushart. Leroy and Wilma have been married 30 years and joined up together as Railtown volunteers shortly after moving to Tuolumne County from San Jose in 1997. They replied to one of our advertisements saying 'Volunteers Needed'. Wilma has worked for the Park in a number of capacities either as a Greeter or Hospitality volunteer since and is often seen with the ladies preparing lunch for our maintenance and restoration crew on Thursdays. She was in professional real estate sales for many years in San Jose. Always ready to chip in wherever needed, Wilma is the traditional host for the annual Railtown Ladies Christmas Ornament Exchange Luncheon, held at their house the first week of December.

As a walking Tour Guide, Leroy has been delighting our visitors with a verbal and pictorial history of the Sierra Railway for a great many years now. He spent his first few years at Railtown working in restoration, particularly a lot of hours on the ceilings and moldings of the 2901 car. He

is also an expert interpreter for the 2901 whenever we have it out on the line. His background in electrical engineering also helped our park on a variety of projects. Originally from the San Jose area, he started early after high school working as a machinery mechanic, electrical technician and eventually became an electrical engineer through job experience and college studies, earning his MBA, Bachelor of Science and Electrical Engineering degrees. He finally retired as Vice-President of a small bay area electrical engineering company. "One of the things I like most about Railtown is the history. I'm driven more and more to know the history of the Sierra Railroad and Railtown. As I acquire more knowledge, I'm able to avoid a 'canned' routine on my tours. It's exciting to me to respond to each tour depending on the visitors and their interest." We asked Leroy what he likes most about Railtown and after a thoughtful minute, he replied "I like the fact the Railtown is perhaps the last fully functional short line steam railroad in the country. I think that makes us a historical jewel." **Thank you Leroy and Wilma!**



Our picture of the month is a historical photo sent in by Kevin Zimmerman (Sr.) It's the No. 8 4-4-0 locomotive, ready for a movie shoot Photo by CG Heimerdinger This engine was used for movie work from 1976-1987, kept at Jamestown.



**PO Box 1250**  
**Jamestown, CA 95327**  
**Return Service Requested**



**TO:**

**Depot Store-** (209) 984-3953  
**Volunteer Desk-** (209) 984-4408  
**Docent Site-** <http://railtown.team.parks.ca.gov/volunteers>  
**Railtown Blog-** [www.railtown1897.wordpress.com](http://www.railtown1897.wordpress.com)  
**Crew Caboose-** (209) 984-0352



### **Railtown Paid and Volunteer Staff Contact Information**

*Newsletter submissions: [RailtownNews@parks.ca.gov](mailto:RailtownNews@parks.ca.gov) or [darainwater@parks.ca.gov](mailto:darainwater@parks.ca.gov)  
(all area codes are 209)*

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<b>George Sapp</b> , Railroad Restoration Lead Worker (DSLE)	774-6368	<a href="mailto:gsapp@parks.ca.gov">gsapp@parks.ca.gov</a>
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<b>Ron White</b> , Stationmaster and Asst. Crew Caller for Car Hosts	551-7087	<a href="mailto:rbarryw@att.net">rbarryw@att.net</a>
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